



## The first 50 years—the next 50 years

I wonder what our founders in 1962 would have thought of the Society as it is now, 50 years on? The first thing to strike them might be the size of the Society with over 3,200 members, rather than the 103 who joined the Society at the inaugural meeting. The Village itself is also much bigger than then, but I would like to think that it is still a place they would very much recognise, especially in the way it ‘ticks’. There are several of those founding members still with us and I do hope they feel that we are doing a good job of meeting the initial aims: -

*The Society shall promote the interests of the Village by preserving its character, encouraging suitable new developments and acting as a focus for other problems in local affairs. The Society shall be non-political and non-sectarian.*

This Jubilee year has been a very busy one, both in terms of the events that we’ve been involved in and in the ‘day to day’ activities of the Committees that are the engine rooms of the organisation. You have heard of many of these activities through these Newsletters and the Press, as well as at the monthly meetings. I would encourage anyone who wants to keep up to date with the activities of the Society to look at our website from time to time. That is the only way we have of advertising what is going on between the editions of the Newsletter.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Events Diary

#### **Wednesday 26th December**

11am meet at the Guild House

#### **Monday 21st January 2013**

8pm in Knowle Village Hall

#### **Monday 18th February 2013**

8pm in Knowle Village Hall

#### **Monday 25th February 2013**

10.30am in Knowle Village Hall

#### **Monday 18th March 2013**

8pm in Knowle Village Hall

#### **Sunday 24th March 2013**

2pm meet at Heron’s Nest

#### **Monday 15th April 2013**

8pm in Knowle Village Hall

#### **Tuesday 23rd April 2013**

2pm at Knowle Parish Church

#### **Boxing Day Walk—Mulled wine and mince pies en route**

2-3 miles—all welcome

#### **Warwickshire Wildlife**

Graham Harrison

#### **Annual General Meeting**

Includes tea, coffee and biscuits after the formal business

#### **Local History—Alderman John Bowen JP**

Anthony Collins. Tea and coffee served from 10am

#### **The Swinging Sixties**

Ray Sturdy—Re-live your youth!

#### **First walk of 2013**

Fields and canal—wet under foot if rain doesn’t stop!

#### **Murder and Manslaughter**

Richard Churchley—Strange & unexplained deaths in Warks & Worcs

#### **Local History—Conducted tour of Knowle Parish Church**

Meet at 1.45pm

(Continued from page 1)

But enough of looking backwards, what about the future? There is no doubt that the Village will continue to change, as it has for the past 50 years. We already know that there will be more housing and therefore more people. Will there be more traffic, or will we all be walking or cycling or using some other unknown form of transport? There is one certain thing, that there will always be a role for the Society. I sincerely hope that there will also be the volunteers to run it. I don't see why not.

On a sober note, we've lost one of those volunteers recently. Elizabeth Stanley passed away in October she, with her husband Norman, have been stalwarts of the Society for very many years. We were very sorry to lose her. Norman continues to be active in our Planning Committee.

In order to ensure that the Society is keeping up to date with our changing world your Trustee Directors are constantly monitoring Government legislation and guidance and keeping a close eye on the activities of Solihull Council. The Localism Act, which was passed earlier this year, has several sections that might impact on what we do, such as introducing the concept of neighbourhood planning. This is supposed to give communities the opportunity to influence the way they develop, but this will always have to be within the framework of national and local plans. Talking of which, the Solihull Local Plan, which will govern the way the Borough develops in the next 15 years has been submitted and will be subject to a formal Inspection during January to ensure it meets all the standards and requirements of legislation before coming into force later in 2013.

We have also taken another look at the 'Memorandum and Articles' of the Society – the documents that control what we can do. These were drawn up in 2005 and we had realised that there were one or two omissions that affected the way in which we operate, so we've taken the opportunity to update them and ensure they are suited to the future. It's a long process and once we are clear what changes we need we will be consulting on our proposals. None of the changes will affect the principles of the Society.

As might be obvious, a great deal of work goes on behind the scenes in the Society, whether organising the monthly meetings, reviewing planning applications, maintaining the History Archive or the other activities that are reported in this Newsletter. All these are carried out by volunteers and there is always a need for people to volunteer to join in with these activities. Some require just a little involvement a few times a year, others rather more frequent involvement. If anyone feels they may be able to offer some time to help the Society and your Village, while getting a real sense of satisfaction out of it, please get in touch, I'm sure we can find you a 'slot'. Two particular positions will become vacant at the AGM, that of Honorary Secretary of the Society, who largely deals with the meetings of the Trustee Directors; and the Chairman of the Natural Environment Committee. We are trying to fill these at present and I'm particularly keen to hear from anyone who might be interested in helping us to do so.

**Leighton Jones —Chairman - Knowle 773894**

## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

### **HEY! WHERE'S MY PROGRAMME CARD FOR 2013?**

Do not be alarmed! This issue would usually come from your distributor with our annual Programme Card (*see picture*) for the ensuing calendar year but not so this year. Since we changed our AGM from November to the following February we are faced with issuing a card with the names and contact details that will be obsolete three months after publication. The Trustee Directors have therefore decided not to issue the card until the April issue when it will cover 2013-14. In the meantime please retain your 2012 card though we are publishing the current officers and committee chairmen on page 12. All the Society's events (walks and talks) for the period up to issue of the card in April are listed as usual on the front page of this issue of the newsletter.



### **NEW BROOM—THIS ONE IS NINE YEARS OLD AND THE BRISTLES HAVE ALL FALLEN OUT!**

Your present editor took on this role nine years ago with the January 2004 issue and it is time for a change and perhaps a fresh design and editorial outlook. It is with great delight that we announce that one of the Trustee Directors, Dave Pinwell, who has extensive experience in the areas that would benefit the Society's newsletter will take over the editorship of the next issue; he is also a very competent photographer and writer and hopefully we will see the newsletter move forward to suit the present time.

**David Bower—Editor - Knowle 775790**

## THE KNOWLE SOCIETY

(a company limited by guarantee)

I give notice that the **Annual General Meeting** of The Knowle Society will be held in **Knowle Village Hall on Monday 18th February 2013 commencing at 8pm.**

A copy of the proposed Agenda can be downloaded from the Society's website.

The meeting will receive Reports on the activities of the Society during the previous twelve months and also the Accounts for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012. It will elect the Officers of the Society (Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer) for the ensuing twelve months and up to four other Trustee Directors.

Nominations for these vacancies should be in writing and sent to the Honorary Secretary of the Society c/o 23 Newton Road, Knowle, Solihull B93 9HL as soon as possible. They should be signed by the proposer, seconder and nominee, all three of whom must be members of the Society.

Nominations including a Proposer and Secunder will be accepted at the meeting. The Nomination Form may be accessed for completion as described below.

Members who wish to propose Resolutions for the Agenda must send their proposed Resolution in writing to the Honorary Secretary at the above address **to arrive no later than 5th February 2013.**

E. J. Linker  
Honorary Secretary  
November 2012

01564 777696

Company Number 05514023

Charity Number 1111085

Members wishing to nominate one or more Officers or Trustee Directors of The Knowle Society for election at the forthcoming AGM may download a nomination form from:

*[www.knowlesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowlesociety.org.uk)*

then navigate to *About Us, Legal* and *Annual General Meetings*.

If you do not have convenient access to the Internet please call the Secretary (number above) who will be pleased to make a paper copy available to you.

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT*****GOVERNING DOCUMENT***

The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, and is a company limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006. The Company registration number is 05514023. As a Charity we are also governed by the provisions of the Charities Act 2011. Our Charity registration number is 1111085.

***RISK MANAGEMENT***

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

***OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES***

The objects of the Society, in the governing Memorandum, are:

- to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic or public interest in the area of benefit or adjacent areas;
- to educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area of benefit;
- to preserve the character of the area of benefit as a thriving community;
- to promote a high standard of planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit and to oppose any inappropriate developments;
- to represent the views of the members to local and other authorities.
- to help foster community spirit by arranging lectures, social events and other appropriate activities.

These objects have been achieved largely through the work of your committees viz: Planning, Community Services, Natural Environment, Local History, Meetings & Social and Walks. Information on the Society's activities has been publicised through the Newsletter, our Website and the local media.

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Several of the committees maintain close contacts with Solihull M.B.C., the Police, Public Transport providers, the Airport and the local traders to ensure that the views of the Society are heard in all relevant areas.

The Local History Committee also maintains contact with appropriate organisations. It manages the Society's collection of documents and artefacts relating to the village and also arranges regular exhibitions of local interest in the History Centre in Knowle Library. This has furniture and fittings provided by the Society in order to preserve and display the artefacts and archived documents.

The Meetings, Social and Walks Committee arranged well-supported programmes of talks and walks throughout the year. Our involvement with the switching on of the Christmas Lights in the High Street has again been well supported and widely appreciated.

In addition to these ongoing activities the Planning Committee has again had a busy year, especially dealing for yet another year with the Planning Application in respect of St John's Close, usually known as the 'Waitrose plans'. Continuing discussions with the developers were successful in improving the details of the design of the building and its surroundings. Despite this the Society raised detailed objections to the final plans based mainly on highway and car parking grounds. In the event the Council Planning Committee granted planning permission, with a long list of conditions. We will continue to liaise with the developers to try and ensure the inevitable disruption is kept to a minimum.

The Planning Committee also made a number of significant submissions to the Solihull Local Plan that will guide the development of the borough up to 2028 in an attempt to control the rate of implementation of housing developments in the Village.

Regular contact is maintained with the Council's Planning Department and representations made when appropriate. The Trustee Directors are also grateful for the advice and assistance given to the Society by the local Councillors on planning and other matters.

This year, being Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, as well as the Society's Golden Jubilee, has been particularly

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busy. We hosted a free Birthday Tea Party in May for members and local residents and played a significant part in the events of the Jubilee weekend in June. Both these helped to promote the Society and its role in maintaining the character of the village. We also published a booklet highlighting some of the activities of the Society over the past 50 years. Unfortunately the Dinner Dance planned for September did not take place due to insufficient demand for tickets.

Funding for the proposed Knowle Green Community Project, which involves the redevelopment of the former toilet block at the junction of Station Road and the High Street has been difficult to obtain, and the project is on hold while an alternative use for the building is being explored.

### **FINANCIAL RESULT FOR THE YEAR**

*The year resulted in an excess of Expenditure over Income of £3,407. (2011 - Excess of Expenditure over Income of £1,633). The increased expenditure largely reflected the costs of the activities referred to above in what was an exceptional year for the Society.*

### **MEMBERSHIP**

At the end of the year the membership of the Society stood at 3263, a further increase of 247 members over the past year, mainly due to the recruitment efforts of one of the Trustee Directors.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Trustee Directors, through the committee Chairmen, carry out an annual risk assessment to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to minimise risks to the Society's assets and to those who take part in our activities.

### **RESERVES POLICY**

*The Reserves Policy of the Society is that sufficient funds are retained to cover a minimum of one year's normal expenditure. It will be seen from the figures that the policy was not maintained this year due to exceptional expenditure for the Jubilees and costs associated with the Waitrose application. The society will continue to monitor the level of reserves throughout the coming year. Your Trustee Directors will not be recommending an increase in the subscriptions this year, but the increased costs of the Society's activities may make this necessary in due course.*

### **GIFTS IN KIND**

The Trustee Directors and many other volunteers freely give of their time and expertise. It is not considered meaningful to place an accurate value on this gift.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD :

Leighton Jones (Chairman) – Trustee Director  
15 November 2012

### **KEEPING UP WITH THE SOCIETY'S NEWS BETWEEN ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER**

On the front page our Chairman mentions that the website is where you should look for latest news between newsletter issues and indeed that is true. However we are also afforded free space in the *Parish Magazine* each month to write about our events and activities for which we are very grateful. This magazine operates a much shorter publication and distribution cycle than the Society's newsletter and being monthly is strongly recommended as a good source of our latest event news. Both publications have large circulation numbers and probably share a substantially similar readership. The *Parish Magazine* also tries to give coverage of wider village events and indeed may be able to speak up in areas which the Society feels constrained by the need for impartiality—it would be hard to carry an advertisement for a trader when the Society then has to give an adverse view on a planning application from that trader.

The magazine is non-profit making, costs being covered by subscriptions and advertising income. A team of 150 volunteers, from writers and photographers to subscription coordinators and distributors, ensure that it is delivered to homes around the local area. Contact Deb Ment 779123 or e-mail [kpmag@kpc.org.uk](mailto:kpmag@kpc.org.uk) if you have a story or enquiry. It costs 70p per issue, available from Knowle Parish Church, Knowle Library, Covent Garden, Inspiration and Windridge Pharmacy in Knowle. Alternatively the annual subscription, for homes in Knowle and Dorridge, is £6.00, additional postage applies elsewhere. To subscribe contact Bryan or Gail Langford, 776370.

## THE KNOWLE SOCIETY

A charitable company limited by Guarantee

### Extracts from the Annual Report and Accounts for the years ended 30th September 2010, 2011 & 2012

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
<b><u>Incoming Resources</u></b>			
Members' Subscriptions	7817	7545	8789
Donations	550	532	323
Gift Aid Tax Recovered	1257	1336	2324
Meetings, Visits and Social Events	1400	1047	1440
Sale of Calendars	0	0	1873
Bank Interest	71	75	128
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>11095</b>	<b>10535</b>	<b>14877</b>
<b><u>Resources Expended</u></b>			
Meetings, Visits and Social Events	1524	1895	2189
Newsletter	2203	2002	2327
Calendars & Donation	0	0	1825
Other costs of Generating Income	1815	686	504
Local History Centre	845	822	695
Christmas Expenses (Tree etc)	424	390	814
Festival in the Park	354	688	0
Knowle Society Golden Jubilee	0	0	2300
Queen's Diamond Jubilee	0	0	125
Costs regarding Waitrose	938	0	1283
Other Charitable Activities	1477	1709	1910
Accountancy Charges	460	488	510
Storage Facilities	851	775	887
Other Governance Costs	1005	1468	1670
Capital Expenditure inc. Depreciation	1484	1245	1245
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>13380</b>	<b>12168</b>	<b>18284</b>
<b><u>Net Income (Net Expenditure - )</u></b>	<b><u>-2285</u></b>	<b><u>-1633</u></b>	<b><u>-3407</u></b>
<b><u>Balance Sheet</u></b>			
Fixed Assets	4980	3735	2490
Stocks	516	258	0
Debtors	318	0	0
Bank Balances	12789	12977	11073
<b><u>Total Funds</u></b>	<b><u>18603</u></b>	<b><u>16970</u></b>	<b><u>13563</u></b>
<b><u>Number of members</u></b>	<b>3091</b>	<b>3016</b>	<b>3263</b>

- 1) The Accounts have been Independently Examined (as required by the Charity Commission and Company Law) and an unqualified Certificate issued.
- 2) A full set of the Accounts is available to any member, free of charge, on application to the Hon. Treasurer, David Watson or by downloading from the website: [www.knowlesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowlesociety.org.uk) - go to ABOUT US and select Financial.
- 3) The Hon. Treasurer is very happy to deal with any queries or concerns. Knowle 732342 or email [treasurer@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@knowlesociety.org.uk)

## REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS 2011 - 2012

It has once again been a very busy year for the society. Compared to last year, there has been a large rise in income and expenditure. Some of the increases are due to exceptional income and expenditure resulting from the Jubilee celebrations and Waitrose costs.

Recruiting of new members has been excellent, with a large membership increase from 3016 to 3263. This has brought in a useful increase in both subscriptions and gift aid recovery of tax. The accounts also show income of £1819 from the very successful sales of the calendars depicting scenes of Knowle by Mike Humphreys. The profit from the sales was donated to the Stroke Association, so the overall cost to the society was neutral. The cost of the Jubilee celebrations came from the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary cost of producing the history booklet (£1579) and holding the tea party (£721) and the society's involvement in the Queen's diamond jubilee street party (£125) - totalling £2425.

The society was also active during the year with some excellent speaker meetings; the visit to Stoneleigh Abbey and social events. As some members had paid for the abandoned Compton Verney visit, the income and advance booking fee repayment is also included in the accounts. The rise in the cost of speakers' fees has resulted in another increase on last year's costs. Christmas costs are also up this year, with the purchase of new lights for the Christmas tree. The society committees have also been very active, with the planning committee working hard on the Waitrose project. £1283 was spent between administration costs and obtaining an independent report on the project.

Inevitably the society is seeing annual increases in its governance costs, including the costs of membership administration, which has increased with the number of members. Postage rates have risen recently, adding to this cost. Finally, the heading of "Other charitable activities" includes the work of the community services committee, natural environment committee, website cost, a donation of £340 to Solihull Council for maintaining the flower tubs on the High Street and £250 to the Arden Academy Trust as a prize for 'Service to the community'.

All in all, the society remains solvent and has had a very successful year.

**David Watson, Hon. Treasurer - Knowle 732342**

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### ***A NEW 'SYMBOL' FOR THE SOCIETY***

One of the discussions we've been having amongst the Trustee Directors is whether it is time, after 50 years, to update the badge, logo or symbol that represents the Society. You will have seen that we've been using a different one this last year to recognise our Golden Jubilee and we think that we should retire the one we used for the 49 years prior to that and introduce one that is more modern, but still reflects the purpose of the Society.



You will be aware that commercial organisations spend vast sums of money on new logos and rebranding themselves. We haven't! We did run a competition for students at Arden, with a small prize for the best. In the end we decided that none of them quite hit the mark and we have chosen the one shown below which was designed by Dave Pinwell. [He had absolutely no part in the decision and didn't get a prize!]

The symbolism of the image can be discussed at length, but I see it as representing protection, the Oaks of Arden, and stability with a modern look. We have of course retained green as our theme colour to give continuity. We hope you approve.

**Leighton Jones**

### **TRUSTEE PROFILE—ANNE SMITH**

I joined the Knowle Society approximately fourteen years ago, shortly after I had moved to Knowle from Monkspath, with my partner (subsequently parted) and two children. I soon was inveigled into being a bulk distributor by a fellow choir member, David Bower, and then took over the main distribution of all the newsletters about eight years ago. I am used to having 2000 copies stacked up in my dining room before I can get them all bundled up into rounds and out to the bulk distributors, every quarter.



I am a Chartered Town Planner and currently work part time for Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land as the Land Manager. I love living in Knowle where I am a member of many groups for different pastimes such as singing, hand bell ringing, racquetball, bridge with friends and having walks with Knowle Society members and friends. Everything all in one place and just a short ride on my bicycle!!!

I would first apologise to Members for my not having been able to prepare your Planning Committee's Report for the last edition of the Newsletter and secondly I would thank Editor David Bower for the preparation of the Report that was published.

Much has happened during the last three months albeit without much success. Despite our objections given verbally at the relevant Council meetings of first, incompatibility with the Conservation Area of the McCarthy & Stone re-development of Greswolde Garage and the adjacent offices (next to The Laurels) in the High Street and second, the lack of adequate car parking provision of the Kimberley Developments' food store for Waitrose in St John's Close, both schemes have been approved by the Council. These approvals are subject to legal agreements being completed between the applicants and Solihull Council under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act which, due to their individual complexity, could take anything up to a further 6 months before actual consent notices are issued.

As a response to the question raised by many however, I now turn to the matter of the construction programme for the Kimberley scheme which is expected to take some 18 months. I understand that first to be built is the car park off Lodge Croft (for use by the building contractor's staff during construction) which will be followed (if not carried out at the same time as the car park) by the demolition of the pair of houses next to the sorting office – this is the site for the new five bungalows. Construction of the new store (accessed from Station Road) will also have commenced at this time. On the completion of the bungalows and following the residents' move from their existing homes to their new homes, the demolition of the five existing bungalows will enable the new car park between the store and the Village Hall to be constructed. On completion, those car parks which are to be replaced with new ones around the Village Hall, can then be built. In this way there is no loss of existing parking capacity during construction. At this time the alteration works to the Village Hall itself can be carried out thus minimising any disruption to the Hall. This last area of car parking (including the replacement of the St John's Close road surfacing) when complete will allow the new store to open for business. I would add that if there are any concerns regarding any aspect of this programme, please do let me know and I will arrange to take up the matter with Kimberley Developments.

Turning now to recent applications lodged with the Council, your Committee has considered all which relate to Knowle, of which three merited detailed discussion and/or action. The first had been the now Council-approved renewal of the three year old consent for the Bread Collection's ground floor 'link' for additional retail space between their High Street building and that of what is now a new off-licence for wines; second, the proposed development (still awaiting the Council's decision) of four new houses behind 35A, 37 & 39 Hampton Road which, even allowing for the demolition of one existing house, created a cramped scheme; and thirdly, the conversion of offices at 21a and 21b Croft House (off Station Road) into four flats to which we raised an objection. The decision for this application is not expected much before Christmas. The appeal which was heard some weeks ago by the Planning Inspectorate against the Council's non-determination of Crest Homes' application for housing at Four Ashes Road, to which the Committee raised an objection at the time, recently resulted in a refusal by the Inspector for the development to proceed. However, costs were awarded against the Council – a most unusual decision.

Mention has been made in the past of the current deposit Draft of the new Local Plan with consultation responses submitted in March. During the last week of November the Planning Inspector called a meeting between the Council and all those who submitted a response, to set the way forward for the actual Hearing which is due to be held during the second half of January. I expect to represent your Committee in three half-day sessions to examine the issues raised last March. The result of the examination of the Deposit Draft will not be made public for a little time after these Hearings but I will keep you advised,

**Andrew Marston - Knowle 774082**

***BYPASS LAND—SEE ARTICLE ON OPPOSITE PAGE***



*Area A from Wychwood roundabout*



*Area C Nature Reserve*



*Area D behind Starbold Crescent*

There have been several interesting issues over the last few weeks but I have decided to concentrate on the Knowle Bypass Route as this is an important subject which could have quite an affect on the open spaces of Knowle. The line of the bypass is very likely to be lifted during 2013 releasing the land to the owners. The owners may wish to consider making planning applications to build houses on these green spaces. I summarise below the areas affected by the changes. If readers have kept their July newsletter you will be able to look at the map on page 9, or refer to the web site.

Area A	Land from the roundabout to Longdon Road (west of Newton Road)	Privately owned
Area B	Houses in Longdon Road	A number of houses owned by SMBC
Area C	Nature Reserve	A narrow strip of land on the west side is privately owned
Area D	Land between Starbold Crescent and St Lawrence Close	A narrow strip on the west side owned by SMBC. The strip on the east side privately owned
Area E	Waste land to the south of area D to the gardens of Station Road houses	Owned by SMBC
Area F	Houses in Station Road	Owned by SMBC
Area G	Land on south side of Station Road	Owned by SMBC

Once the Council had prepared for a meeting which we had requested we attended at their offices in October for discussions with four SMBC officers. The Officers made a clear statement that they were not willing to discuss any land or properties which were in the ownership of the Council. It seems likely that in these hard times the Council will be anxious to sell the land and houses. The Officers had no objections to the Society trying to gain 'Village Green' status to the land which is privately owned. Land which is owned by local authorities cannot legally be designated 'Village Green' under section 15 of the Commons Act 2006. This may cause some problems on the council owned strip of land in Area D. The Council may however retain this open space which has a well used footpath.

Following our meeting with SMBC the Society joined The Open Spaces Society (OSS) and I purchased their book *Getting Greens Registered*. The book has been very useful and I have passed a brief summary to all Trustee Directors to use as a reference. Having carefully considered all the comments I think there is a good chance of obtaining 'Greens' status but it won't be easy and will require a lot of time and effort. There may also be considerable expenses. There is the question whether the whole bypass land should be in one application but as there are three separate pieces of land with two landowners I think we need to concentrate on preparing three applications.

What comes next is the collection of evidence to support the applications. The OSS has prepared an 'Evidence Questionnaire' which is a five page document with 38 questions. We need substantial numbers of residents who are willing to complete these forms. The OSS recommends that interviewers should help each of the residents who are willing and able to sign such a document. One person needs to be in charge of each of the three applications, although it may be possible for one person to be in charge of all three. It is suggested by OSS that small teams should be established. We are looking for members to join these teams, as we cannot cope with all three applications with the people who are currently active. If you are interested in helping in any way please contact me and I'll explain what is involved.

As I've explained part of Area D is Council property and therefore cannot be registered as a 'Green'. However the presence of a footpath across the land may be helpful in keeping the area as an extension to the main park. At the very least we could consider whether a Right of Way could be established.

The Council will not provide access onto Longdon Road for Area A. If this area is to be accessible from the south, access from one of the cul de sacs will be necessary but this may not be acceptable to residents. There are also brick walls preventing any access.

There is a lot of work to be done and we hope that members will respond by offering to help with this important campaign. To be honest, if we do not get enough volunteers these areas of open land may well be lost forever, so please get in touch. *[Photos of Areas A, C & D may be seen on the opposite page.]*

The New Year is upon us with a number of long term issues coming to fruition.

### **AIRPORT**

In order to make use of the extended runway at Birmingham Airport, changes are required to the flight paths, to and from the Airport. A 12 week public consultation for proposed changes to the Standard Instrument Departure Routes (SIDs), for aircraft **taking off** towards Knowle on runway 15, will commence in January 2013. During this consultation period, airport representatives will be visiting Knowle and you are urged to take the opportunity to attend when the venue is announced. Consultations are already taking place with other communities and further information will be provided in due course. Full details of the airspace change proposals will be made available via the airport website: [www.birminghamairport.co.uk/airspace](http://www.birminghamairport.co.uk/airspace) or call 0121 767 7433 for further information.

### **AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (ACC)**

The ACC now has representatives from all over the West Midlands and is regarded as an example of best practice for other ACC's (all Airports have to have one). The changes to the A45 are on target despite the weather and the extension of the runway is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2014.

### **SMBC**

We are still receiving complaints about Advertising Boards (A Boards) in the High Street and SMBC is again reviewing the siting of Boards and checking that Licenses are held. In terms of obstruction there should be a clear space of 1.2 metres around each Board.

We are pleased to see that repair work has been carried out to the road/path which runs from St Johns Close to Lodge Road. Thanks to Lynne Steyn and SMBC for pursuing this issue.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Bridget Sproston has agreed to attend Rural Partnership Forum Meetings, which cover all aspects of Transport, the following information is given.

#### **Have your say:**

Network West Midlands is running a series of events at locations across the West Midlands between now and the end of May. You can drop in to the marquee and talk about all public transport services, make complaints, give compliments or suggest improvements. There are two events planned for Solihull:

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2013 – Mell Square, Solihull 10.00am – 12 noon.

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013 – Solihull (Venue to be confirmed)

#### **Rural Bus Routes:**

Following the consultation before Christmas, the next stage in Centro's re design of the Rural Bus Routes, including the S2 and S3, will be the publication of the proposed routes sometime in January. During February and March there will be a chance to feed back on the proposals, so please look out for this and make sure your views are known.

### **PARKING AND TRAFFIC**

One thing we all agree on is problems with parking and traffic, although there is no common agreement on the solution. SMBC has drawn up a strategy for Solihull as a whole, which includes areas currently with restrictions but free parking, Knowle being one. The strategy is some free parking followed by charges. The Knowle Society will be involved with the consultation along with other interested organisations. When actual proposals are published we will seek comments. Watch this space and read the local press.

### **DEFIBRILLATORS**

Suggestions put forward to site accessible defibrillators for emergencies within the village are being explored and Lilla Baker has spoken with DRRA (Dorridge Residents and Ratepayers Association) which already has plans well underway.

### **POLICE MATTERS**

New Contact Number: For non-urgent calls to **Neighbourhood Police** dial: **101**

Local Neighbourhood Police continue to attend our meeting where possible. They remind everyone that with dark evenings crime tends to rise, so be watchful.

**John Rowley - Knowle 778289**

If you live in Station Road Knowle, there is a fair chance that your house was built by my great grandfather's building firm John Bowen and Sons. Indeed the firm may well have built many houses in the Knowle and Dorridge area in the 1930's. John Bowen had acquired an enviable reputation, having built the Victorian Law Courts in Corporation Street in Birmingham and many other public buildings. In 1924 the firm was relocating the business from Birmingham to Knowle, when it acquired the decorating business of Corbetts. John Bowen's son Bert Bowen lived close by at Lodge Paddocks in Earlswood and Bert's daughter, Barbara Bullivant looked after Corbetts.

As a child, all I knew about John Bowen was that he was the son of a blacksmith from the village of Rochford near Tenbury Wells in Worcestershire. Family stories relate that he walked into Birmingham with a sack of tools on his back to start work as a carpenter in 1868. In 1870, at the age of 25, he started on his own account the firm that later became one of Birmingham's most well known and respected firms of builders.

Initially as a builder and taking premises in Balsall Heath he began in a small way by erecting villa residences and various buildings. The company's premises were in George Street on the site of the former Balsall Heath Baths. John Bowen's shrewdness and the excellence of his work, laid the foundations for his success, and he made rapid progress as a contractor, building public buildings in Corporation Street, Victorian Board Schools in Birmingham, Kings Norton and Aston, and several Swimming Baths and Churches.

Whilst the Victorian Law Courts (1887) is the firm's 'pièce de résistance', it built many other public buildings and business premises; nine of which were in Corporation Street. These included both the 1887 Wesleyan Hall and its 1900 replacement, which still stands opposite the Law Courts, major stores such as Liberty's (1886) and Newbury's (1896) in the Old Square and A. R Dean's furniture shop (1896) at 153 Corporation Street. The firm's work included the Corporation Baths in Monument Road (1881), The Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute (1883), Edgbaston Assembly Rooms (1883), Kings Heath Wesleyan Church (1896). Cornwall Buildings in Newhall Street (1897), the Birmingham Meat Markets, and the grade 1 St Agatha's Church (1899) in Sparkbrook, as well as at least three of the Victorian Board Schools.

Two enormous contracts were taken on in the building of the Hollymoor Asylum for the City of Birmingham (1900/1905) and Netherne Asylum for the County of Surrey (1905/1909), whilst John

Bowen personally chaired (but did not build) for 23 years the committee of Barnsley Hall Asylum.

Following John Bowen's retirement in 1909 the firm went on to build such buildings as Nechells Baths (1910), Hockley Post Office (1911), the Old Repertory Theatre (1913), the Hall of Memory (1922) and the Beacon Insurance building in Hall Green (1937).

The last building known to have been built by the firm was the old Midland Bank in the station approach at Dorridge. This is now a cafe. A poor reflection of the glorious years of the Victoria Law Courts but I am told a good cafe!

John Bowen had his original business premises in Edwardes Street and later George Street, Balsall Heath which were then in the County of Worcestershire and built a house in 1884 close by at the corner of Strensham Hill and Edgbaston Road in Moseley, which he called 'Rochford' after his village, and where he lived until he died in 1926.

During his life John Bowen was involved in many charitable and public duties, and was High Sheriff of Worcestershire in 1916 and had his own Coat of Arms. He was both a prominent Mason and a committed Wesleyan Methodist and was generous in financially supporting the building of churches in the Moseley Road Methodist circuit.

My thanks go to Janet Erzen of the Knowle Society for allowing me to include a request for information about the company which led me to have contact with Malcolm Priest a Managing Director of Greswolde Construction, which now owns John Bowen's yard in Station Road and who also was very helpful. These meetings have led me to know more about John Bowen and Sons going into liquidation in 1970 and even tracing the administrator to the South of France.

If any member of The Knowle Society knows anyone who worked for John Bowen and Sons or has knowledge of buildings the company built I would be most grateful to know more as I plan to publish a book in the new year.

In the meantime you can learn more about John Bowen if you Google - Alderman John Bowen J.P. or contacting me direct:

anthonyrcollins@btinternet.com  
0121 454 1034 or Mobile 07979 247400

**Anthony Collins**

## TRUSTEE DIRECTORS

### OFFICERS

*Chairman & Walks:* Leighton Jones - 01564 773894  
*chairman@knowlesociety.org.uk / walks@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Deputy Chairman & Community Liaison:* Bill Bohanna - 01564 739390  
*deputychairman@knowlesociety.org.uk / liaison@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Honorary Secretary:* Liz Linker  
*secretary@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Honorary Treasurer:* David Watson - 01564 732342  
*treasurer@knowlesociety.org.uk*

### COMMITTEES

*Communications & Membership:* Peter Johnson - 01564 770268  
*comms&memb@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Community Services:* John Rowley - 01564 778289  
*communityservices@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Natural Environment:* Ian Simmonds - 01564 778692  
*environment@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Local History:* Janet Erzen - 01564 779040  
*history@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Meetings & Social:* Charles Robinson - 01564 775770  
*meetings@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Planning & Village Plan:* Andrew Marston - 01564 774082  
*planning@knowlesociety.org.uk / villageplan@knowlesociety.org.uk*

### OTHER

*Membership Secretary:* Peter Johnson - 01564 770268  
*membership@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Knowle Green Community Project:* Andrew Marston - 01564 774082  
*kgcp@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Newsletter & Website Editor:* David Bower - 01564 775790  
*newsletter@knowlesociety.org.uk / webadmin@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Newsletter Distribution:* Anne Smith - 01564 779120  
*distribution@knowlesociety.org.uk*

*Publicity:* David Pinwell - 01564 772348  
*publicity@knowlesociety.org.uk*

### TRUSTEE DIRECTORS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

Lilla Baker - 01564 739073

Peter Ewin - 01564 776381

Martin Warr - 01564 779708

## NEWS FROM KNOWLE LIBRARY LIAISON

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Still going strong thanks to our very willing volunteers who have given up two hours every Saturday since late 2011, since when we have had over 2,000 visitors. If you can spare just over two hours a month to help as a library volunteer please call me.

### **COMPUTER LESSONS FOR BEGINNERS**

Do you know your mouse from your megabyte? Would you like to learn how to use the internet or send an email - all in a friendly relaxed environment? If you would you like to expand your computer knowledge - the Library can help. It offers a six week computer course for £36 on various days and times to suit you. To book your place simply give the library a call and open up a whole new world of learning.

### **ACTIVITIES FOR UNDER 5 YEAR OLDS**

The library holds regular activities for the under 5s. There is no need to book, just turn up and enjoy and all for just £1 per child.

**Jellybeans** is held monthly and includes stories, rhymes and crafts followed by refreshments.

**Alphabet Club** is held fortnightly and includes a story and craft session where children can make their own alphabet book.

### **READERS' CIRCLE**

A second readers' circle was launched at Knowle Library last year; it is currently looking to recruit some new members. If you want to widen your reading choices and take part in book discussions, this is the group for you. The circle meets monthly on Tuesdays at 11.30am. No need to book, just turn up on the day.

## STORIES FROM THE AUCTION ROOMS

The auction world is full of scurrilous stories, we thought we should illustrate some of the amazing and unusual finds we have uncovered in Knowle village since the Auction Rooms opened in February 2012. In the first week a ‘mature’ gentleman came into the saleroom with a paddle given to him when he was a young boy to power his dinghy up the Thames. It was damaged and he brought it along as a joke because friends were bringing their goodies. The paddle fetched £9500 in the Tribal Art sale as it was a rare example from the Solomon Islands in the Pacific.

Many of our clients have been middle-aged couples ‘down-sizing’. This new fashion is beneficial for us and the client, the clients get cash for all the ‘stuff’, which their children do not want and they can choose to spend it themselves or treat their children/grandchildren.

Next, to the widow who found a WW1 bayonet in her shed and was too scared to take it to the police, so she brought it to us and we sold it in our Military sale. In fact it's astonishing how many guns, swords and daggers came in from the sheds, garages and even under the beds of the good citizens of Knowle!

One woman was selling her diamond ring from her first marriage in order to rescue a stray dog, which she had befriended at her villa in Malta. The proceeds from the sale would cover the cost of the flight and quarantine. In our last auction we had a collection of autographed photographs of seven astronauts, which raised over £700.

The Asian Auction in November included two cloisonné dogs of Fo, which would have guarded the entrance to a temple in China. They fetched £16,000 for the local woman who consigned them.

The latest odd entry for our December auction is a file of drawings and ephemera related to the first electric car designed in Birmingham 1890's but never put into mass production.

These finds represent a very small sample of the thousands of lots we have processed in the past ten months. We are now seeking new premises so if any one knows of some property for sale please let us know because Knowle Auction Rooms would like to stay in Knowle.

*Valerie Hoff Bedford—Knowle Auction Rooms, 20 Station Road, Knowle—776226*

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## TRUSTEE PROFILE—DAVID BOWER

When your father has been a founder member of the Society, its chairman and later first president and has also been widely and mostly affectionately known since the last war as one of the local doctors, you don't really want to get involved with something that was ‘his thing’. At least that was how I saw it for the first 50 years of my life until that day when then Chairman Peter Ellis hit me on my vanity spot and asked if I could help the Society set up a website. Of course I said yes and soon was asked to include the newsletter as well, something which John Chaloner had developed over the years from simple cyclostyled and stapled sheets to a professionally printed publication. I was helped in the redesign by an architect member Paul Burley who designed a masthead for the newsletter and advised on a new layout which has held for the last nine years, perhaps due for refreshing now.



A special time was the now defunct Civic Trust sponsored ‘Pathfinder’ initiative with Leighton Jones and Malcolm Brain in which we studied St Johns Close as a project within their two-week training with members of other civic societies. Working on the database of archive records for the Local History Centre was another challenging and interesting project which has given that Centre a great asset and owes a lot to the professional foundation laid by Elaine Warner. I have found my involvement has been most rewarding and the Society is buoyant from an enormous range of initiatives and valuable contributions to the local community.

About me – partly retired, working for a Christian training and outreach organisation and formerly in telecommunications, building networks and computer centres around Europe, proud carrier of a bus pass and Senior Railcard, irritating cyclist and regular walker.

### **EXHIBITIONS**

The first exhibition for 2013 will be in February and will be entitled 'Alderman John Bowen JP'.

In 2014 we intend putting on an exhibition for the 100 year anniversary of World War 1. The exhibition will comprise mainly of names and photographs of those individuals from the Knowle area who, in one way or another, took part in this war. To date we have collated around 900 names, which out of a then population of approximately 2000, is almost unbelievable.

As you can imagine there is a great deal of research to do for this exhibition and we would like to ask for your help. We do not want to leave anyone out so if you know of anyone in your family who took part in this war, whether they were in the forces, civilian posts, whatever, we would like you to let us have their names and where possible a photograph, in uniform or not, so that we can honour them in our own small way by including them in the exhibition. Any photographs would be copied very carefully and then returned to their owners.

Please contact Janet Erzen or the Local History Centre (upstairs in the library) any Saturday morning 10am - 12.30pm or email [history@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:history@knowlesociety.org.uk).

### **Article by Anthony Collins on Alderman Bowen**

The article on page 11 of this newsletter giving an account of the life of John Bowen JP and his connection with Knowle, has been written for us by his great grandson Anthony Collins. This is just one of many examples of the assistance we can offer with the help of our archives, into all aspects of research into local village history and local family history.

If you think we can be of any help with your own research please do not hesitate to contact us on 01564 779040 or email [history@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:history@knowlesociety.org.uk). Alternatively enquiries can be made at our Local History Centre, 1<sup>st</sup> floor Knowle Library any Saturday morning between 10am – 12.30pm. If anyone feels they would like to join our team to help with research, organising exhibitions, helping to maintain our archives or as stewards, please contact us also as above.

### **TALKS**

The subject of the first talk of the year will also be John Bowen and will take place on 25th February in the village hall 10am for 10.30am. The speaker will be Anthony Collins.

### **VISITS**

The first visit is on Tuesday 23rd April, 1.45pm for 2pm and will be a conducted tour of Knowle Parish Church. We couldn't get more 'local history' than that! We think there must be a lot of newcomers to Knowle (newcomers = lived here less than 50 years!) who would welcome a chance to look around and hear the history of one of Knowle's oldest and most beautiful buildings. There is no charge for this visit but small individual donations towards the upkeep of the church would be gratefully received.

Details of the 2013-14 schedule of exhibitions, talks and visits will be published in the April issue of the newsletter.

### **AROUND THE SHOPS**

Not a lot is happening on the shop front. As reported in the last newsletter some of the staff from Diva Hairdressers are renting chairs in the Retreat and their previous premises on the High Street have been taken over by a different hairdressers and is called 'The Salon'.

There is yet another charity shop on the High Street in the premises previously occupied by Blockbusters.

### **OTHER NEWS**

On a more sombre and sad note we have to report the recent sad death of one of our stalwarts of local history, Elizabeth Stanley. Elizabeth was a member of The Knowle Society for many, many years and with her love of and vast knowledge of local history she made a major contribution to the Local History team and to the Local History Centre. Elizabeth retired from the committee two years ago but stayed on as a steward, often appearing on a Saturday morning even when it wasn't her turn, to see what we were up to and to keep us on our toes. She was always a welcome sight to see and will be very much missed both as a colleague and as a friend.

Since the last newsletter we have had two talks, a Quiz night and put the Christmas tree up outside the Guild House. The first talk in September was on wildlife entitled *Images of Nature* by Peter Preece, a wildlife photographer who, with his wife Margaret, has spent many years travelling around England photographing everything they found – from insects to animals and has won many prizes for his efforts. Much of their work is done from hides situated in Warwickshire around and about his home and we were treated to a selection of his best photographs with an insight into the many hours and painstaking preparations required to get such results, not to mention the patience required to get just one perfect image.

A Topical Quiz followed in October hosted by our favourite quiz master Steve Worrell. Questions covered a wide range including a section on Knowle. The event was sold out with 72 people attending an enjoyable evening with a Fish & Chip supper and a chance to win shopping vouchers in a 'Heads and Tails' competition at half time.

November has always been reserved for the AGM but this year the AGM has moved to February allowing us to host a talk by Acorns Children's Hospice Trust. Acorns Children's Hospice Trust is a registered charity, established in 1988 and offering a network of care for life limited and life threatened children, young people, and their families, across the heart of England. Joanne Danaher, community fundraising officer, explained the facilities that the Hospice offers people and how there is no charge for families using the services provided by Acorns. Acorns is totally dependent on voluntary contributions, either of money, or goods for resale through their charity shops such as the one in our precinct. Joanne explained that "receiving support from local people is particularly important during these tough economic times." The talk certainly shed a new light on the shop's activities in Knowle and at the end of the talk people donated over £100 to this good cause.

Finally to round off the year the traditional Christmas tree was erected at the end of November outside the Guild House. For this year the lights have been renewed with low energy LEDs (900 of them) . Thanks go to Craig for supplying the tree and Doug, Martin, Peter and Bill for their help in getting the tree upright and arranging the lights in a suitably artistic manner.



*Images of Nature*



*Quiz Night*



*Quiz Night*



*Erecting the tree—Some work, some watch!*

Mrs B Archer  
 Mr J Burke  
 Miss J Burke  
 Mr & Mrs T Byworth  
 Mr G J Chambers  
 Mr P De Cesare  
 Sir Tony Hawkhead C.B.E.  
 Mr B Hawkins

Mr & Mrs J W P Jaffe  
 Mr & Mrs A F Johnson  
 Mr & Mrs I D Maidment  
 Mr & Mrs R J Mansfield  
 Mr & Mrs J Masters  
 Miss L Masters  
 Mr M Thrupp

As members will be aware this is a very busy time for our Newsletter distributors and, I must say, they do a marvellous job. As I write this (at the end of November, less than 2 months into our year) it is pleasing to be able to report that we have already received 80% of the annual subscriptions. I suspect many Societies would be delighted to have such a level of support from their members and volunteers. I believe that several of the distributors have been doing the job for upwards of 20 years which is commitment indeed.

If for some reason you have not been at home when the Distributor has called for your subscription could I ask you to send it direct to me? My address is shown on the panel to the right. The amount of the subscription is £3 for a single membership and £5 for a joint one.

Whilst we lose very few members because they decline to stay with us, the distributors often discover at this time of the year that some have moved away and others, sadly, have died. This inevitably leads to a temporary reduction in our membership. On the other hand we have been successful in recruiting 21 new members since the last Newsletter and their names are given above. We hope they will enjoy their time with us.

**Peter Johnson - Knowle 770268**

**TRUSTEE PROFILE—PETER JOHNSON**

I am married to Susan and we have lived in Knowle for over 30 years. We have 2 children and 4 grandchildren.

Following early retirement I have been heavily involved with various voluntary bodies including the Parish Church and the Society. I became Secretary in 2005 and subsequently Honorary Treasurer. I became Membership Secretary in 2011. Of the three roles this is the most interesting especially as it brings me into contact with many of our members and with our 86 Newsletter Distributors.

I am always encouraged by the very positive way in which the Society is regarded by local residents as I believe this is good for the future of both the village and the Society.



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**A warm welcome to the 21 new members listed opposite.**

*The Knowle Society has over 3200 members; can you encourage your friends and neighbours to join too? This may be done either by contacting the Membership Secretary or through an application form on: [www.knowledesociety.org.uk](http://www.knowledesociety.org.uk)*

**Membership:**

*Peter Johnson  
 1 Barnbrook Road  
 Knowle  
 SOLIHULL  
 B93 9PW  
 01564 770268  
[membership@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@knowlesociety.org.uk)*

**Editor:**

*David Bower  
 01564 775790  
[newsletter@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@knowlesociety.org.uk)*

**Distribution:**

*Anne Smith  
 01564 779120  
[distribution@knowlesociety.org.uk](mailto:distribution@knowlesociety.org.uk)*

**Proof-readers:**

*Maria Brown  
 John Chaloner  
 Sandra Lea  
 Pam Watson*

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